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A. L. A. Trustees section

Conference 1903

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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TRUSTEES' SECTION.*

THE Trustees' Section of the American Library Association held its annual meeting at the Cataract House, Niagara Falls, on the afternoon of Wednesday, June 24. Deloraine P. Corey, chairman of the Section, presided, with Thomas L. Montgomery as secretary. The meeting was called to order at 2.30 by the chairman, who said:

I wish to take this opportunity to speak briefly of a matter of business which concerns trustees. The librarians who come to the annual conferences of this Association come as the representatives of our libraries. Whatever broadening and strengthening they receive is for the advantage of our libraries; they are our delegates who, in a manner, act for us and for our benefit. Is it not pertinent to ask if we ought not to pay a portion at least, if not the whole, of the expenses of our representatives? I know that this may not be possible in some of the smaller libraries, but in many it is possible, and they can bear the burden, in part or entirely, better than their librarians. Now I have three propositions to offer for your consideration. First, this action is proper; second, it is desirable; third, in many causes it is practicable. I think no one will dispute the first two propositions. The difficulty lies in the third. The position of a library with regard to that proposition depends more upon its ability than upon its will, and each board must settle that for itself. But remember that a conviction of the right and a will to carry it out go far in deciding the matter. It was objected by one library board that municipal appropriations and library funds are given for the maintenance and extension of library work, and that an expenditure of this kind would be a diversion of funds from their proper uses. I answer that the work of the American Library Association is for the improvement and extension of library methods and means, and that the placing of a librarian within its influence, where he may gather in its benefits, is as legitimate an expense as the payment of his salary. There is one thing which even the smallest library can do — that is, when a librarian wishes to attend the conference, it can grant him or her leave of absence without loss of pay or the loss of a portion of his or her vacation. I speak of this because I have been informed that in some libraries even this concession has not been granted. I trust, however, that that is a thing of the past and not of the present. It is unwise, it is unjust. I like to think it is one of the errors of the weaker nineteenth century which the stronger twentieth will not make.

W. E. **Henry** read a paper on

THE CHIEF DUTY OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

It is to be presumed that the conscientious trustee feels that every official duty that he is called upon to perform requires all his capacity to do it as it should be done. Yet the one duty that towers infinitely above all other possible duties is the selection of the managing and responsible head of the institution—the selection of the one who shall bring honor and reputation and distinction to the institution or the one who shall permit the institution to weaken and deteriorate and pass almost into oblivion under his management.

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* A misunderstanding in relation to the management of the Trustees' Section of the American Library Association appeared at the recent conference, an impression prevailing in some quarters that the Section is under the control of librarians and is conducted in their interest.

The Trustees' Section is an integral part of the Association; but its purposes are distinct from those of other sections, and it takes cognizance of the affairs of librarians only as they are connected with those of trustees. Its present chairman, who was elected at Waukesha, has been president of a library board for more than a quarter of a century and has never been a librarian. Its secretary, who for a longer term has been indefatigable in his endeavors to advance the purposes of the Section, is a trustee of a prominent library, and his position as a state librarian does not interfere with his earnest efforts in the interest of trustees.

It has been the aim of the Section to interest trustees by such papers, addresses and appeals as are available; to bring trustees and librarians into a closer sympathy; and to raise the standard of trusteeship, where needed, by a wider knowledge of library means and methods.

Papers dealing with matters of importance to trustees have been presented by trustees and librarians of experience; and if the latter have spoken from the standpoint of librarians, it has been to enlarge the field of observation and to set forth such facts and suggestions as might not otherwise come before an enquiring trustee. D. P. **Corey**.

I consider the selection of a librarian the one essential obligation of a board of trustees of a library — the one duty which, if successfully performed, sinks all else into insignificance — to nothingness. On the other hand, if this one duty be unsuccessfully performed, all other functions must likewise fail.

Many other official duties performed by boards, while valuable and helpful to the one central idea of institutional success, are non-essential when compared with the paramount trust. They must understand and act upon the doctrine that "but one thing is needful," and their chief official duty is to supply the one thing, and that is a librarian.

Those things that we are likely to give ourselves most concern about are usually the non-essentials. Gifts in the form of valuable buildings and endowments are desirable and helpful, but not essential after a library is established. Large collections of books are much to be sought, but where a few are gathered together in the proper spirit they engender much life.

Particular systems of library economy are of superior value to other systems, but there is little vital distinction between any two systems when either is in the hands of a competent librarian. An exceedingly attentive board, regulating every movement of the librarian, may show interest, but it is not essential and may show meddlesomeness rather than vital concern.

But if you should ask me how to detect a real librarian from the various counterfeits I should have no difficulty in describing the species so that it might be identified wherever found. The way in which I happen to know just the essential marks of a librarian is this: I went directly to those persons who are librarians and inquired of them and they gave me all the signs. One says "she should by all means be a trained librarian, either from a library training school or by experience in a well-managed public library." Another says, "The library is whatever the librarian makes it, and she cannot make it what she is not." Says one, "She must be by nature patient, just, generous, gentle, mild, positive, firm, rapid, but not hasty, in her judgment, and so finely tempered that she may yield but never break." "The failure or success of a library is largely determined by the librarian," says another. "No one should seek such a calling until assured of an abiding interest in learning, and in learning as related to the people." "All his life and all his work are to be directed toward and in the interest of others." "It is to the librarian, then, that we must look for leadership in making our libraries more and more a wise and valuable investment for the good of the people." "A librarian guides the reading of the young and strives to elevate that of the general public." "The librarian ought to be able to select the books to be purchased; if this work is done by others he should still be able to guide readers, and this implies liberal education in school and extended reading." "A librarian must be both a scholar and a person of some executive ability." "The library is a part and ought to be the center of the intellectual life of the community, and needs at its head an intellectual leader." "To the qualities of mind and heart which give sympathy and interest the librarian should add a professional training in the use and care of a collection of books that shall make the contents of her treasures instantly accessible to students in many occupations and all classes." Another says, "It is no light matter to select a librarian. There must be courteous and discriminate handling of a very varied public, appreciation of the differing needs and wants of different people, and sympathy with those whose life has been affected by hard conditions." Mr. Andrew Carnegie said, "If you ask whether a library is worth having, I answer 'That depends on the librarian.'"

This leads me to another phase of the question: What is the relation of the board to the librarian after the selection is made and the librarian installed? If the board has been so unfortunate as to select the wrong person for librarian, then the board must give much of its time and energy and patience to superintending the poor librarian. If supervising could make a good librarian out

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of a poor one we could feel compensation in the saving of souls, but with all this vexing supervision the incompetent librarian usually remains so. Trustees of a college do not employ a president and then expend their energies in showing him how to do his work. The stockholders of a mine do not run the actual workings of the mine; for that they employ what they believe to be a competent superintendent. If he does not prove so he is relieved at once.

If the right person has been selected for librarian then the board can expend its energies where there is more money and less vexation of spirit than is to be found in supervising the work of an incompetent librarian. Let the librarian conduct the library.

The ultimate answer to this question will, I presume, depend somewhat upon our respective views of the large subject of government. For myself I believe in absolute authority coupled with absolute responsibility; in short, absolute monarchy with the ultimate authority resting in the electors.

Let the librarian understand, when elected, that he is the only one who can make a mistake in the library and he alone must be accountable for every error; alike shall he be credited with every success.

You see where this doctrine leads. It means that the head of the library must be free to select all assistants and equally free to dispense with the service of any who do not serve well. No person can afford to take the responsibility for the work of persons whom he did not appoint and whom he cannot dismiss.

After the librarian is installed and made absolute in control, the degree of direct support needed from the board of trustees depends largely upon the size of the city considered. In a large city, where the head of the institution is not personally known to a considerable number of the people, he needs less of the direct personal support of his board, but in the small town or city, where the librarian is known to most of the people and comes in contact with the patrons of the library, it is more and more necessary that the people as well as the librarian feel that the board of trustees is directly behind every order, and that the librarian is the executive officer of the board.

Of course the board should know what is going on in the library management and be interested in it, but not with the thought of personally interfering in the management of the institution.

Another point. I have stated what is the common opinion as to what a librarian should be, and I have not put the standard any higher than the times and circumstances demand, nor higher than can now be supplied, but I have placed it higher than we are always ready to compensate. The librarian and competent assistants must be adequately remunerated. The best service is always the cheapest, either in public or private, and this is especially true where the institution served is not a money-making institution, existing for commercial ends. The head of any public library ranks with the city superintendent of schools and the principal of the high school of the same city, and should rank so in pay, and no person is a competent assistant who is not worth the salary paid to the subordinate teachers in the same city high school. With such remuneration we can secure and retain the services of really competent librarians, and without it we must be satisfied with as much less than the best, as we pay less.

A communication was read from Mr. HERBERT PUTNAM on

THE YEAR'S WORK AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

The description or discussion of the Library of Congress at this Section, or of any particular library, is justified only by the assumption that the operations of this library are of somewhat specific concern to those in conduct of other libraries. They may be of concern — in the case of a national library they ought to be of concern — as offering useful example of processes, the most scientific and efficient processes. But in this country, under present conditions, in the case of the national library they should be of concern as contributing directly to the aid of other libraries either by adding to their resources or by improving their bibliographic apparatus, or by increasing the efficiency or reducing the cost of their administration.

A. At the Section meeting of the last year I mentioned as a chief such aid the distribution of our catalog cards (1) without charge to certain depositary libraries, (2) at cost to

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any others that may choose to subscribe. This distribution, begun in November, 1901, has been steadily pursued, enlarged, further systematized and improved, and may now, I think, be considered to be upon a substantial basis. I remark here merely these characteristics of the system: 1. The distribution not requiring subscription to a *series* or any specified number of cards, or copies of cards, may be of interest to the smallest as to the largest library. 2. While the distribution in its early stages could interest chiefly the library desiring cards for its current accessions, the stock of cards as it approaches toward a complete exhibit of the collection in the Library of Congress contains now a large percentage of the titles in an ordinary library wishing to recatalog or to substitute printed for written cards. 3. A "travelling index" to the cards in stock, consisting of a copy of every card thus far printed, can now be borrowed by any library desiring L. C. cards for books in its existing collection. Arranged by author, it forms a precise and convenient guide for ordering. It comprises nearly 100,000 titles. Similar indexes of smaller groups—15,000 titles and upward—covering the books most common in smaller libraries are also available and may be borrowed without charge save for transportation. 4. The revised, enlarged edition of the A. L. A. catalog is to be seen into print by the Library of Congress. The titles comprised in it will all be covered by L. C. cards. These cards will, we hope, include the class numbers in both the Decimal and the Expansive classifications, and possibly some annotations.

B. The library is continuing the publication of lists of material in its collection, which lists are freely distributed to other institutions. Since the last conference there have been issued one on the Philippine Islands, one of Lincolniana, one a calendar of Paul Jones manuscripts. In addition to such, however, it is issuing reference lists upon topics of current interests which may serve useful purpose in any library dealing with the reference reader. Ten such have been published during the past year, not including revised editions of the list on Trusts and of that on Marine Subsidies previously issued. They are on Anglo-Saxon interests, Arbitration, Cabinets, Constitution, Corporations, Negro question, Pensions, Railroads (government ownership of), Reciprocity, and Strikes.

C. The library gladly answers inquiries addressed to it by mail as to the existence and location of material in quest by an investigator. It is acquiring, and proposes without consideration of expense to complete, the fullest possible information as to matters bibliographic: as to what material exists on any subject, and as to where it may be found. This information and the aid of the experts in charge of it are freely at the disposal of any inquirer; but with especial willingness are at the disposal of librarians of other institutions whose immediate resources are insufficient to furnish an adequate answer to their constituents.

D. Within the limitations defined in our published statements, the library is tending to increase its loans of books to other institutions in order to supply a need of a serious nature which cannot be met by the local resources.

E. Within the past year the library has initiated an exchange of duplicates with other libraries. This may grow into a *system* of large dimension and general interest.

F. In its purchases the Library of Congress is endeavoring by its specific action and by its influence to recognize the claim of other libraries to material local to the regions in which they lie and not duplicable. It will not, for instance, though its own interest is universal, compete against the New York Public Library for a manuscript whose primary interest is local to New York. It hopes by this course to help in bringing about a greater specialization among the archive and research libraries of this country, a mutual respect for the fields proper to each, forbearance in competition and positive reciprocal aid in their development.

G. The library is initiating a series, which it will edit and publish, covering a history of the libraries of this country and incidentally of the development of library administration here.

H. Fundamental, however, to the larger service which the library may perform as a national library are the following: the completion of its reclassification, and of a catalog which shall contain at least an author card (printed) of every book in its collection;

the enlargement of its funds for purchase; and the rounding out of its expert service. I am glad to be able to report that the reclassification and recataloging have made such substantial progress that the rate of progress is now sensibly increasing, and an end may be looked for within three years. The force for this work reached its normal of 91 persons on the first day of last July. The funds for increase, four years ago but $30,000, are for the coming year $100,000. The allotment for printing and binding — essential to the service to other libraries and the general public — four years ago but $25,000, was this year $95,000, and for next year will be $185,000. In several directions the expert judgment and service of the library has been strengthened; in two most notably: by the acquisition of a highly trained expert to take charge of and develop its department of Music; and by the acquisition of Mr. Worthington C. Ford to take charge of and develop its department of Manuscripts. With Mr. Ford in this position, the library is in a way to respond to the obligation upon it—to become the headquarters for the investigation of original sources in American history—an obligation and prospect recognized by the government in making it the custodian of historical manuscripts in its keeping; and by the Carnegie Institution in associating with it its first two grants for historical research.

During the past year the library has acquired by purchase manuscript material of great importance, including the papers of Salmon P. Chase, papers of Commodore Preble, a large collection of letters of Daniel Webster, etc., and by gift the superb and hitherto unexploited collection of Andrew Jackson papers in the possession of the Blair family at Washington. It is seeking originals wherever obtainable, and it is reaching out into remote parts of the globe for information of others of which transcripts may be obtainable, to the advantage of the student of American history.

The chairman announced the appointment of a committee on nominations, consisting of S. W. Foss, N. D. C. Hodges, W. E. Foster.

A. E. Bostwick read a paper on

LAY CONTROL IN LIBRARIES AND ELSEWHERE.

The system by which the control of a concern is vested in a person or a body having no expert technical knowledge of its workings has become so common that it may be regarded as characteristic of modern civilization. If this seems to any one an extreme statement, a little reflection will convince him to the contrary. To cite only a few examples, the boards of directors of commercial or financial institutions like our manufacturing corporations, our railways and our banks, of charitable foundations like our hospitals and our asylums, of educational establishments like our schools and colleges, are now not expected to understand the detail of the institutions under their charge. Their first duty is to put at the head of their work an expert with a staff of competent assistants to see to that part of it. Even in most of our churches the minister or pastor—the expert head—is employed and practically controlled by a lay body of some kind—a vestry, a session or the like. Government itself is similarly conducted. Neither the legislative nor the executive branch is expected to be made up of experts who understand the technical detail of departmental work; all this is left to subordinates. Even the heads of departments often know nothing at all of the particular work over which they have been set until they have held their position for some time.

It is hardly necessary to say that this system of lay control is of interest to us here and now, because it obtains in most libraries where the governing body is a board of trustees or directors who are generally not experts, but who employ a librarian to superintend their work.

To multiply examples would be superfluous. Lay control, as above illustrated, is not universal, but I postpone for the present a consideration of its antitheses and its exceptions. It looks illogical, and when the ordinary citizen's attention is brought to the matter in any way he generally so considers it. In certain cases it is even a familiar object of satire. The general public is apt, I think, to regard lay control as improper or absurd.

With the expert and his staff, who are concerned directly with the management of the institution in question, the feeling is a little different. It is more like that of President Cleveland when he "had Congress on his hands"—a sort of anxious tolerance. They bear with the board that employs them because it has the power of the purse, but they are glad when it adjourns without interfering unduly with them.

Are either of these points of view justified? Should lay boards of directors be abolished? Or, if retained, should those without expert knowledge be barred?

Now at first sight it certainly seems as if the ultimate control of every business or operation should be in the hands of those who thoroughly understand it, and this would certainly bar out lay control. I believe that this view is superficial and will not bear close analysis.

The idea that those who control an institution should be familiar with its details appears to originate in an analogy with a man's control of his own private affairs, when his occupation and income make it necessary that he should attend to all those affairs personally. The citizen who digs and plants his own garden must understand some of the details of gardening. The man who does his own "odd jobs" about the house must be able to drive a nail and handle a paint brush. This necessity vanishes, however, as the man's interests become more varied and his financial ability to care for them becomes greater. At a certain point personal attention to detail becomes not only unnecessary but impossible. To expect the master of a great estate to understand the details of his garden, his stable, his kennels, as well as the experts to whom he entrusts them, is absurd. He may, of course, as a matter of amusement, busy himself in some one department, but if he tries to superintend everything personally, still more to understand and regulate matters of detail, he is wasting his time.

We must seek our analogy, then, both for lay control and for the attitude of the ordinary citizen toward it in that citizen's management of his private affairs. He knows his own business—or thinks he does—and he finds it hard to realize that the details of that business could ever grow beyond his personal control.

But, after all, this progress is one towards the normal. Attention to details in the case of the poor man is forced upon him. Except in rare cases, he does not really care to shovel his own snow; he would prefer to hire a man to do it, and as soon as he can he does do so. So long as his sidewalk is properly cleared he is willing to leave the details to the man who clears it. He does not care whether that man begins at the north or the south end, or whether his shovelfuls are small or large.

Here, if we examine, we shall find a common characteristic of those kinds of work where laymen are in control — the persons for whom the work is done care very much about results; they are careless of methods so long as those results are attained. And in a very large number of cases the persons for whom the work is done will be found to be the public, or so large a section of it that it is practically a group of laymen so far as the particular work in question may be concerned.

A lay board of directors or a lay departmental head, then, is simply and properly a representative of a greater lay body that is particularly anxious for results and not particularly anxious about methods. Lay control is thus not illogical, but is the outcome of a regular and very proper development. But, as has been said, it is not the only method of controlling a great institution. An institution may be managed by a graded body of experts. So were the old guilds of craftsmen managed. So are many ecclesiastical bodies, notably the Roman Catholic Church. We may call this method of control hierarchical. It has some advantages over lay control and some disadvantages. We may imagine such a system applied to libraries. All the libraries in a state, we will say, would then be managed by the state librarian, and all these officers would be subject to the orders of the librarian of the national library, who would be supreme and accountable to no one. Without going into detailed discussion of this extremely supposititious case, we may say that the objection to it would be that the persons who are especially interested in the results of the work done are not represented in the controlling hierarchy. Where the persons interested are all experts, as in a guild of craftsmen, there can perhaps be no objection to control by experts; though even in this case we are leaving out of consideration the persons, generally laymen, for whom the craftsmen do their work.

In fact, any trouble that may arise from the lay control of a body of expert workers lies just here—in the failure either of the controlling authority or the trained subordinates to recognize and keep within their limitations. It should be the function of the supreme lay authority to decide what results it wants and then to see that it gets them—to call attention to any deviation from them and to replace those who cannot achieve them by others who can. It should be the part of the expert staff of subordinates to discover by what methods these results can best be reached and then to follow out these methods.

When the lay head attempts to direct the details of method, or when the trained subordinate thinks it his duty to influence the policy of the institution, then there is apt to be trouble.

Such results are apt to follow, on the one hand, the inclusion in a board of trustees of a man with a passion for detail and a great personal interest in the work under him, but without a keen realization of the necessity for strict organization and discipline in his expert staff; or, on the other hand, from the presence in that staff of a masterful man who cannot rest until he is in virtual control of whatever he concerns himself about.

I say trouble is *apt* to follow in such cases. It does not always follow, for the organization may adapt itself to circumstances. The interested trustee may play with ease his two roles, fitting into his board as a lay member and becoming practically also a part of the expert staff. The masterful subordinate may dominate his board so as to become its dictator, and thus do away for a time with his lay control. We have all seen both these things happen, not only in libraries, but in banks, in hospitals, in charitable institutions. In some cases it has been well that they have happened. But although an occasional stick is flexible enough to be tied into a knot, it would be hazardous to try the experiment with all sticks. Some may bend but more will break.

Is it not better to accept frankly the division of labor that seems to have been pointed out by the development of our institutions for the guidance of their management?

Boards of trustees in this case would find it necessary to decide first on the desirable results to be reached in their work. This is a phase of library discussion that has been somewhat neglected. What is the public library trying to get at? Not stated in vague terms, but in concrete form, so that the trustees can call the librarian to account if he fails to accomplish it? It is only fair to the librarian that he should be informed at the outset precisely what he is expected to do, and then it is only fair that he should be left to do it in his own way.

This is an unoccupied field, and it would be an eminently proper one for the Trustees' Section of the American Library Association. We librarians should be very glad to know just what you expect us to accomplish, for on that depends our manner of setting to work. Do you wish us to aim at decreasing the percentage of illiteracy in the community? or the arrests for drunkenness? Are we to strive for an increased circulation? And will an absolute increase be satisfactory, or must it be an increase proportionate to population? Is it definitely demanded of us to decrease our fiction percentage? Shall we, in any given case, devote our attention chiefly to the home use or the reference use of the library? Shall we favor the student or the ordinary citizen? These questions, of course, cannot receive a general answer; they must be decided differently in different cases, but at least we may agree on the type of question that it is admissible to answer at all and on the degree of detail to which it is permissible to go in stating a requirement.

For instance, is it admissible for a board to say to its librarian, "The results that we require you to show include the following: A well-ordered collection of books classified according to the Dewey system, bound in half duck and distributed wth the aid of the Browne charging system?" I think it will be granted that this would be an attempt to control the details of method in the guise of a statement of desired results. But where shall we draw the line? How specific may be the things that a board may properly require of its expert staff? That is the question whose solution by this Section would be an inestimable benefit to all libraries and librarians. At present there is wide difference of opinion and of practice on this point. Many people would not agree at all with the limitations that have just been laid down; even those who do agree would differ widely over their interpretation.

There is hardly time to anticipate and

meet criticism. I shall be reminded, I suppose, that the funds for carrying on the library's work are in the hands of the trustees, and that one of the main objects of their existence is to see that the money is honestly spent, not stolen or wasted. How can they do this without close oversight of methods? To this I would reply that this important function of the board is distinctly the requirement of a result, that result being the honest administration of the library. The method by which it may be administered most honestly is best left to the expert head. Naturally, if evidence of peculation or waste comes before the board the librarian will be held to account as having failed to achieve the required result of honest administration. In this and in other respects the necessity that the board should know whether or not the desired results are being attained means that the work of the executive officer should be followed with attention. It must be evident, however, that this does not involve control and dictation of methods.

It must also be remembered that what has been said refers only to the administrative control of the institution. The duties of trustees as custodians of an endowment fund, if such there be, or in soliciting and receiving contributions as well as other financial considerations, are separate from this and have not been considered.

Again, I shall be told that the head of the executive staff is not only a subordinate but also an expert adviser of his board. This is true; and as a consulting expert it is his duty to give advice outside of his own administrative field if he is asked for it. It may even be his duty to give it unasked occasionally, but this comes very near to the interference that I have deprecated. He who would tread this borderland must tread softly. On the other hand, the expert may and should ask the advice of members of his board as individuals or of the board as a whole when he needs it and when he feels that it would give him confidence or strengthen his hand. In this whole matter there is a clear distinction between the advisory and the executive function on one hand and on the other.

In short, the view taken in this paper may be briefly summed up as follows: Lay control in libraries and elsewhere is a logical and proper development. It would not, on the whole, be well for one who should wish to endow a library to make an expert librarian sole trustee for life with power to select his successor. That would be a fine thing for the librarian, but it would be neither desirable nor proper. It is well that the trustees should be responsible representatives of the lay public, for whose benefit the library is to be conducted. But as the public is interested chiefly in results, the trustees should confine themselves largely to the indication and requirement of these results, leaving methods in the hand of their expert staff of subordinates. And it is eminently desirable that librarians should hear from a representative body of trustees some expression of opinion regarding the extent of this limitation.

Miss Crafts: Would it be out of place for one who is both trustee and librarian to make some suggestion in regard to these so-called Trustee Section meetings? It has been my privilege to attend three since I have been on the board of directors and they are identical in their prominent characteristics. As a rule the officers are one or both of them librarians. The people who take part in the program are librarians. In the audience the trustees are conspicuous by their absence. In their principal lines of thought, so far as I have observed in these meetings, the speakers have been treading on what Mr. Bostwick has called the borderland where we need to tread softly. They have been giving directions to the trustees as to their functions and their duties and in such a way sometimes as to occasion offense. I know that last year the proceedings of this section meeting were printed and distributed, and in the board with which I am connected two or three members of that board spoke to me of having received those pamphlets with resentment of the spirit of the meeting as shown in the report. They were members of the board, who have had the best interests of our library at heart, who are giving time and thought and money, but they did not like the spirit of that report. Now, if I am not mistaken, the object of this Section is to interest the trustees, to make it really and truly a trustees' section, to bring out a good attendance of those in control of the libraries of the country; and in order to do this it seems to me we must adopt somewhat different tactics from those so far in use. If the meetings could be put into the hands of trustees altogether, having both members and officers of the Section trustees, and letting trustees take part in the program, it would be but a few years before we should have an attendance of trustees that we might be proud of. The trustees have their own problems to meet and discuss. I know that members of my board would be very glad indeed for a conference with other trustees who have similar problems. But what is the use of their coming to a meeting like this? It seems to me that we, as librarians, when I speak from the other point of view, would find it very helpful if certain members of our boards of trustees could be induced to come to these meetings feeling that they had a real part in it, and that when they went back the A. L. A. meant something, they would work in better harmony with their librarians. When trustees ask librarians to take part in the program of a real trustees' section it would probably be to discuss the problems that they want discussed from the librarians' point of view, and not to have the librarians tell them just what their own duties are.

Mr. Montgomery: I would like to say, in reply to the general criticism brought out by this statement, that both the officers of this Section are trustees, and that one of them is president of his board, and the other is the chairman of the board of one of the largest libraries in the country. That, I think, ought to dispose of the idea that either or both of them are without sympathy for the trustees' standpoint. I have done active work of trusteeship in connection with the Free Library of Philadelphia since its foundation, and the problems which interest me most are the problems that meet the trustees of any large institution of that kind. In acting as trustee of that institution I have always taken a ground, not like that taken by Mr. Henry, but rather the opposite one, that the trustees should supplement the work of the librarian. No librarian is omniscient; he cannot be; and there are in every board of trustees men who know certain things better than the librarian. When I am a librarian—and I am a librarian — I try to make the best uses of those qualities in the members of the board of the institution that I am connected with. Vice versa, when I am a trustee I try in every way that I can to help that librarian along, not to retard him in any way, but to help him in the things which perhaps he knows least about; not in a dictatorial way, but to persuade him, if I can, that it is for his own best interests and the best interests of the institution.

Regarding the question of asking trustees to take part in this discussion, it may be interesting to note that I asked exactly 28 trustees to take part in this meeting to-day, and that, for one reason or another — they were all prominent men — they were unable to be with us. As to the trustees who were offended by the pamphlets sent out by this Section, I cannot understand their attitude. It may be that they had the idea that it was sent out to them by librarians. It is due to the Section that such an idea should be corrected. Both Mr. Corey and myself are trustees, and we are the only officers of this Section. It is unfortunate if we are not able to make the trustees understand the fact that they are not only welcome, but that both Mr. Corey and myself would rejoice to step down and out if we could find the proper men among the trustees to take our places and carry on this work. If we can find anybody who will do this work, and do it energetically, they can rely upon Mr. Corey and myself to do everything in our power to forward it. But when I tell you that about 150 letters were written in getting up this meeting, I think you will understand that it means a large amount of detail work, and the results do not always justify the amount of work demanded. As for the papers read to-day, I think they were all exceedingly good papers, and I would not be at all averse to having them go into the hands of every trustee of every library in the United States and run the risk of giving offense.

H. T. Kelly: Mr. Chairman, I believe I am indirectly responsible for calling forth this discussion. I was the person who last year moved the resolution that the proceedings of last year's meeting be printed and circulated among trustees. I stated then what my object was in doing so, and I was glad to express my satisfaction at the progress that had been made under you, sir, in the matter of helping along the Trustees' Section of the American Library Association. With the lady who has recently spoken I had felt that the trustees had not been "in it" for some time. Some years before I had travelled from Toronto to Philadelphia to attend one of the meetings of the Trustees' Section, and I found nothing whatever to interest trustees. Last year I found a marked improvement. I know, as has been said, that there has been some misunderstanding about the character of the report that was sent out last year from this Section to trustees, many thinking it was issued by librarians and was made up of suggestions from librarians to trustees, and that was due to the fact that some of those who were prominent in discussions and in preparing the papers were librarians. Now, there should be no objection to that. Trustees and librarians must co-operate. But I think trustees should be made to feel that this is their Section; if librarians can aid them by interesting them in their work, so much the better; but let the trustees feel that they are a part of this Section. Then you can induce trustees to come to it. There are very many questions which can be very readily discussed both by librarians and trustees at such a meeting as this, and if I may make a suggestion, it is that in some future meeting there may be more discussion and fewer papers; that certain subjects be announced beforehand relative to the work of trustees, and that certain trustees come prepared to discuss these matters. I am glad this discussion was started, and I hope that still greater progress may be made in interesting trustees. With that in view, I would recommend that the proceedings of this Section be published and sent out to trustees this year and their source made clear.

Mr. Corey: The attitude of trustees toward this Section, as shown by their not coming here, shows that there is much need of this Section. We need to do a good deal of missionary work. I am rather glad to hear the statement made by the trustee from Minneapolis that some of her trustees took exception to the papers read last year. I wish they had taken exception so strongly that they had come here to controvert those statements. The quickest way to bring about such an understanding in anything of this kind is to get up a disagreement, and I like to have a paper read that is radical and that brings on good discussion. There is no other way of finding out where we stand. Now, if the trustees who are here would interest themselves to bring other trustees next year, I think we might do something. And I am going to say for myself what I wouldn't say to trustees—and the librarians need not hear it either—that I have no great opinion of the average trustee. Trustees should take more interest in the work which they have to do. With a good many their work is entirely perfunctory.

W. C. Kimball: Speaking as a trustee from the Passaic Public Library, I want to say that while there may have been a possibility that the report sent out last year was not taken quite in the spirit that it was intended, I think that a proportion of 99 out of 100 went to the right place and did lots of good. I want to say, as a trustee, that it would be a very difficult matter to get very many trustees to attend these meetings. The trustee of a public library puts in anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes a month attending the monthly meeting. He comes there, the librarian has the bills all prepared, the secretary reads the minutes of the last meeting, the bills are approved, the committee on books are told that they can, in conjunction with the librarian, expend so much money, and a motion to adjourn is made, and there is an interval of another 30 days. Now, if you have a good librarian the library will run along satisfactorily. If you haven't a good librarian, you will have lots of trouble; so I think if trustees would go on the principles set forth in the papers read to-day they will get along right. In my experience, trustees can't run a library. They must have a good librarian to do that; and when the trustees have engaged a good librarian they can approve the bills and adjourn in 20 minutes; and in my opinion it will be impossible to get active business men—and those are the men we want for trustees — to pay their carfare and spend two or three days at a convention of the A. L. A. I happen to be here on some other business or I should not be here as a trustee.

Mr. Kelly: I will make the same motion that I did last year, and that is, That it be recommended to the executive board that the proceedings of this meeting be printed and distributed in separate form as was done last year. *Voted.*

Mr. Montgomery: Just as a last word, I would say that the officers of the Association have information that the sending out of that reprint from the proceedings last year was certainly productive in certain cases. A number of librarians are attending this convention as a result of that pamphlet having been sent to their trustees. They had never before had their attention called to the fact that it was their duty to send their librarian to the A. L. A. meetings at the expense of the library, and we have very positive evidence that at least that much has been accomplished by last year's action.

E. A. Hardy: I should like to take exception to the statement of Mr. Kimball on two points. It is not always the case that trustees are usually business men. Some of the most valuable trustees we have are professional men — lawyers, doctors, teachers, and ministers — and I think if the matter were brought properly home to them they would take part of their vacation time to come to the A. L. A. meetings. I also disagree with the statement that it is impossible to get a good attendance of trustees at an A. L. A. conference. I know in the Ontario Library Association, which has been in existence now three years, the majority of our attendance is from trustees. I am satisfied that a large proportion of the public libraries of this continent must to a very large extent be managed by trustees. In many public libraries there is no librarian as librarians understand the term. Anybody does the work who is willing to accept the office, and if there is any intelligent or expert service at all in connection with that library, it must come from some of the trustees. That trustee may be a lawyer, physician, teacher, or some one of that sort. There are many such people who would come to these meetings if the matter were clearly put before them. It seems to me that the Trustees' Section attendance must largely be made up by those within a hundred or two hundred miles of the place of meeting. Mr. Montgomery worked very hard to get a good attendance here, but the special announcement circular was sent to only one library in the Province of Ontario. Now, there are about 200 libraries within 75 miles of here. We do not expect our American brethren to know a great deal about Canadian details any more than a Canadian knows about the small libraries of Pennsylvania, but it seems to me that the secretary of this Section might well cooperate with the secretary or president of the library association of the state or province in which the meeting is to be held.

Mr. Montgomery: That is a very proper suggestion.

Mr. Hardy: In that way an attendance of possibly 25 to 100 trustees might be obtained. In the Trustees' Section at the two previous meetings I have attended, and in several of the meetings of the Association, the trustee has been frequently referred to as a necessary evil that librarians must put up with. He furnishes the sinews of war and has his uses, of course, and we can tolerate him and he has his place; but he is a necessary evil. That is perhaps the impression that trustees have received. I think all such references as that were made jocularly and were not intended to be taken seriously, but that impression may have gone abroad. If it has, I think it has done harm.

The report of the

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

was presented, recommending the re-election of the present officers, viz.: Deloraine P. Corey, trustee Public Library, Malden, Mass., chairman; Thomas L. Montgomery, state librarian of Pennsylvania, secretary. The report was accepted.

Adjourned, 4 p.m.

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